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Busing for Desegregation

Abrams, Roger. "Not One Judge's Opinion: *Morgan v. Hennigan* and the Boston Schools." *Harvard Educational Review*, 45, 1 (February 1975), pp. 5-16, 75. EJ 115 253.

Abrams summarizes the factual and legal bases of the Boston Federal District Court's 1974 order to desegregate Boston schools. He points out that although this decision by Judge W. Arthur Garrity precipitated the violent reactions covered so well by the national news media, it is completely in keeping with judicial precedent and is entirely appropriate, given the evidence of the Boston School Committee's discriminatory practices.

The techniques used by the Boston School Committee to enforce and extend segregation have been employed by other school districts, and other courts have ruled that their use to perpetuate segregation is impermissible. Student assignment, open enrollment, construction of new schools, discrimination in faculty hiring and promotion, and busing were all utilized to maintain a severely segregated school system in Boston.

Abrams notes that although busing has become the focal point of the Boston school desegregation controversy, it cannot be considered the real issue, since prior to the court order more than 30,000 Boston school children were bused to maintain segregation. As he states, "The question then is not whether busing will be instituted, but rather where the buses will go."

Abrams' article offers a revealing profile of a segregated school system engaging in subtle, and sometimes devious, means of preventing desegregation. Viewed in this context, Judge Garrity's ruling that the Boston schools were segregated de jure is perfectly logical.

Armor, David L. "The Evidence on Busing: Research Report." *The Public Interest*, 28 (Summer 1972), pp. 90-126. EJ 059 759.

According to Armor, "busing is *not* an effective policy instrument for raising the achievement of black students or for increasing interracial harmony." His conclusions, based on an examination of data from desegregated schools in Boston, Hartford and New Haven (Connecticut), Ann Arbor (Michigan), White Plains (New York), and Riverside (California) have

sparked a great deal of controversy among social scientists (see Pettigrew, Useem, Normand, and Smith, annotated below).

The expected benefits of interracial contact through desegregated education have not been realized, according to Armor. The ideal of the integrated society in which all members participate fully and equally seems to be as far from actualization as ever. While Armor does not question the goals of integration, he does criticize the means (especially compulsory busing) used to achieve those goals. As he states, "Although the data may fail to support mandatory busing . . . these findings should not be used to halt voluntary busing programs."

Armor's article is essential reading material for anyone interested in the effects of desegregation and busing, as well as the role played by social scientists in these controversial areas.

Bolner, James, and Shanley, Robert. *Busing: The Political and Judicial Process*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974. 257 pages. ED 102 242.

This well-organized volume offers an excellent review of the recent legal and governmental history of busing. Bolner and Shanley outline the judicial, congressional, and executive processes that have shaped current public policy on busing to achieve desegregation and racial balance. They are careful to define the relationship between desegregation and busing, stating that "the busing issue is in large part a symbol of opposition to school desegregation and residential integration." Busing has become "a catch-phrase that includes a cluster of deeper, more complex societal problems and issues."

These problems and issues have elicited various responses from all levels of government, including state and local governmental units. Not all the resulting legislation and regulation has been effective or even constitutional. But its quantity (as well as its quality) is indicative of the strong reactions that desegregation and busing have aroused.

Bolner and Shanley include an analysis of recent national opinion polls, the results of which have been used as evidence, primarily by opponents of busing. Many widespread misconceptions about busing and desegregation are reflected in both the questions and the responses.

Order copies from Praeger Publishers, Inc., 111 Fourth Avenue, New York, New York 10003. \$17.50, cloth.

Coleman, James S. "Racial Segregation in the Schools: New Research with New Policy Implications." *Phi Delta Kappan*, 57, 2 (October 1975), pp. 75-78. EJ number not yet assigned.

"Desegregating a city's school system accomplishes little if the school system is or becomes all black, with whites in the suburbs," according to Coleman. To ascertain the effects on population patterns that desegregation has had, Coleman examined trends in segregation within and "among or between" school systems. He discovered that between-system segregation has increased "in every region of the country and in nearly every large metropolitan area" since 1968. This type of segregation indicates widespread residential segregation over a much larger area than intradistrict residential segregation.

Indeed, in certain large cities, efforts to desegregate city school districts may result in increased overall segregation as whites move out of the central city to the suburbs and suburban school systems, according to Coleman. Since the Supreme Court has severely restricted cross-district, urban-suburban busing to achieve desegregation, the trend toward predominately black inner-city schools and predominately white suburban schools promises to expand, as Coleman predicts.

Coleman concludes from his examination of the data that neither compulsory desegregation by busing nor traditional neighborhood school attendance is a workable solution to the problem of white flight. Instead, Coleman recommends a freedom of choice approach—one that would "give each child the right to attend any school he wished, unconstrained by residence."

Hudgins, H. C., Jr. *Public School Desegregation: Legal Issues and Judicial Decisions. ERIC/CEM State-of-the-Knowledge Series, Number Twenty-four. NOLPE Second Monograph Series on Legal Aspects of School Administration, Number Three.* Topeka, Kansas; and Eugene, Oregon: National Organization on Legal Problems of Education; and ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1973. 87 pages. ED 082 272.

Hudgins' monograph provides a concise summary of the legal history of desegregation. He presents the role of busing in the context of the entire judicial movement toward ending segregated education, showing that the emergence of busing as a way to remedy segregation has been a logical outgrowth of the courts' basic philosophy and interpretation of the Constitution.

However, Hudgins is careful to point out that the courts have been far from consistent in dealing with busing during the past ten years. At the federal district court level, for example, contradictory rulings have required busing in some cases while severely restricting its use in others. The difficulty of reconciling the frequently conflicting principles of equal educational opportunity with traditional notions of the integrity of the neighborhood (including the neighborhood school) is evident even in Supreme Court rulings, as Hudgins suggests. Although his review of Supreme Court decisions does not include the most recent rulings bearing on busing, he does summarize in some detail the important 1971 *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* decision.

Order copies from National Organization on Legal Problems of Education, 825 Western Avenue, Topeka, Kansas 66606. \$1.00.

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Jackson, Gregg. "Some Limitations in Coleman's Recent Segregation Research." *Phi Delta Kappan*, 57, 4 (December 1975), pp. 274-275. EJ number not yet assigned.

Jackson takes issue with Coleman's data and with the significance of his findings that indicate increased white migration brought on by desegregation in large cities. In answer to Coleman's *Phi Delta Kappan* article (annotated above), Jackson points out that other factors (per-pupil expenditure and population density, for example) appear to have just as much effect on the movement of whites out of the central cities. When these factors are analyzed along with Coleman's data, "desegregation loses most of its ability to predict changes in white public school enrollment."

According to Jackson, Coleman's prediction that the percentage of blacks will increase in central city schools with the instigation of desegregation is somewhat shaky, since the predicted increase in black enrollment over a ten-year period is "no more than one percentage point per year."

Even if Coleman's assertion that desegregation increases white flight is true, Jackson notes that desegregation does increase "interracial contact," a fact that Coleman's analysis ignores.

Taken together, these two articles illustrate the difficulty and controversy encountered by social scientists trying to determine the effects of desegregation and of busing.

Mills, Nicolaus, editor. *The Great School Bus Controversy.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1973. 356 pages. ED 085 469.

In one of the most intelligently compiled anthologies available on busing, Mills has attempted to present a spectrum of views on the subject from social scientists, legal specialists, government officials, and journalists. Including materials from such diverse publications as *The New Republic* and *The Village Voice*, the articles in Mills' collection are well written and make interesting reading, even if the reader does not agree with some of the various authors' opinions.

Included are summaries of four major Supreme Court decisions that have helped to shape desegregation and busing policy, along with commentary from such respected sources as Alexander Bickel, constitutional law expert. Other articles examine the evidence on the effects of desegregation and busing, as well as the policy implications of this evidence. "On-the-Scene Reports" deal with individual communities' approaches to busing and desegregation.

Order copies from Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, New York 10027. Order No. SDN 24-31-9, \$5.95.

Orfield, Gary. "Congress, the President, and Anti-Busing Legislation, 1966-1974." *Journal of Law and Education*, 4, 1 (January 1975), pp. 81-139. EJ 115 853.

Orfield's well-written article clearly portrays the vulnerability of all branches of government, including the judicial, to the pressures and emotions that explosive issues like desegregation and busing arouse.

Orfield traces the checkered career of congressionally supported desegregation from its formulation in the 1964 Civil Rights Act through the attempts in the 1970s to circumvent both previous congressional commitment to desegregation and the Constitution itself. Once Congress had reversed its course and once the executive branch (Nixon's administration) had decided to strongly oppose busing, the courts were "left in an extremely exposed position on an explosive political issue."

Orfield points out that the fragile coalition responsible for the passage of the legislation supportive of desegregation and busing soon dissolved when the implications of this social reform became known. As he states, this legislation "set in motion a revolution in American education that soon went beyond the dimming vision of many of the law's sponsors."

Ozmon, Howard, and Craver, Sam. *Busing: A Moral Issue. Fastback Series, No. 7*. Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1972. 38 pages. ED 073 565.

Contrary to its title, this paper does not deal very substantively with the "moral" aspects of busing. It does offer a concise, interesting survey of the history of public student transportation in America (dating from the nineteenth century), as well as a brief account of the legal history of busing and desegregation.

Ozmon and Craver's analysis of the evidence on the effects of busing generally stresses those studies that have shown positive student achievement and adjustment results, though they do emphasize that the research is sketchy and, on the whole, inconclusive. They maintain that "the lack of research involving 'massive' busing should not be taken as a justification for not busing."

Ozmon and Craver note the "dilemmas" of both the anti-busing position and the probusing position. Those who oppose busing on the grounds that it violates the sanctity of the neighborhood and the neighborhood school fail to realize that "the neighborhood school as a place where all classes were equal . . . where all races were treated equally never existed." Those who support busing may fail to realize its limitations. As Ozmon and Craver state, "Busing may be too simple a solution" for the ills of a segregated society.

Although their analysis of the social and "moral" issues related to busing is far from exhaustive, these authors do indicate an appreciation of the complexity of those issues.

Order copies from Phi Delta Kappa, 8th and Union, Box 789, Bloomington, Indiana 47401. Individual fastback, \$0.50, prepaid; set of six, \$3.00.

Public Knowledge and Busing Opposition: An Interpretation of a New National Survey. Washington, D.C.: United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1973. 28 pages. ED 078 510.

"The public seriously misunderstands the facts of the busing controversy," according to the results of this opinion survey compiled and conducted for the Commission on Civil

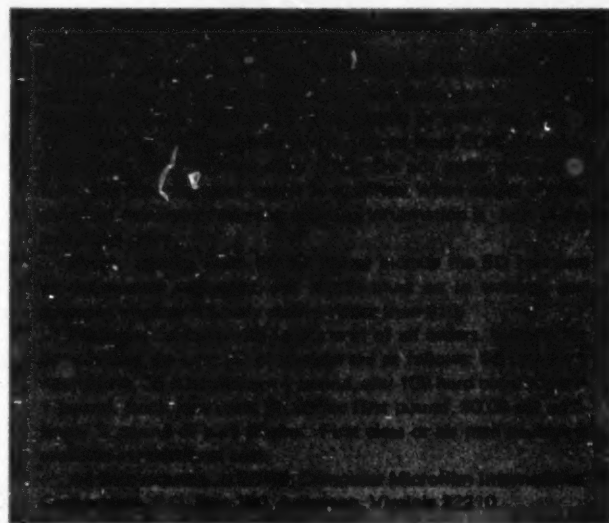
Rights. This poll was intended to clear up some of the confusing results of other national surveys—results indicating that while a majority of the respondents favored integration, they opposed busing, the chief means of accomplishing integration. As the commission points out, this confusion arises because of "incomplete or misleading" questions about busing.

From the results of its survey, the commission concludes that many people believe the generally untrue assertions about busing made by its opponents. For example, a majority of the respondents believed that busing plans are "extremely expensive, adding 25 percent or more to local school costs," whereas costs for busing are actually much lower, according to the commission. And surprisingly, only half of the respondents know that bus transportation is very safe for children, much safer than walking or even car transportation.

The survey results show that those who are well informed about the use and effects of busing are supportive of it, as well as being much more opposed to congressional action restricting or forbidding its use in school desegregation.

Although some of the opposition to busing may be assigned to misinformation about its effects, the commission acknowledges that "this survey does not show public enthusiasm for busing."

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Pettigrew, Thomas F.; Useem, Elizabeth L.; Normand, Clarence; and Smith, Marshall S. "Busing: A Review of 'the Evidence'." *The Public Interest*, 30 (Winter 1973), pp. 88-118. EJ 067 489.

In a detailed critique of Armor's article, "The Evidence on Busing: Research Report," Pettigrew and his colleagues question the validity of Armor's data, his standards, and his conclusions. First, they assert that it is inaccurate for Armor to present his data as "the evidence on busing," since he omitted at least seven studies meeting his methodological criteria that show "positive" achievement results for black students in desegregated schools.

Second, Pettigrew and others maintain that Armor establishes "unrealistically high standards by which to judge the success of school desegregation." Armor allowed only one year in which to observe the effects of desegregation, far too short a time period according to Pettigrew and his associates. They also note certain methodological weaknesses (inadequate control group, for example) in Armor's examination of METCO,

Boston's voluntary busing program. And finally, they point out that Armor's condemnation of mandatory busing programs simply is not substantiated by the data he employs. As they state, his paper "is not about 'busing' at all, much less 'mandatory busing'."

These two articles, taken together, give the reader a good idea of the ambiguities in much of the research on desegregation and busing, as well as the conflict resulting from differing interpretations.

Smey, Barbara A. "Busing—Step or Go? Interviews with School Superintendents." *New Jersey School Development Council Research Bulletin*, 19, 3 (Spring 1974), pp. 4-10. EJ 099 441.

The attitudes of school superintendents and the nonprofessional public are generally congruent on the issues of desegregation and busing, according to Smey's survey of 19 New Jersey superintendents. By comparing the responses of these administrators with opinions expressed in Gallup polls, she discovered that the supposed "polarization" of attitudes between professional educators and laymen does not exist.

Like the general public, the superintendents in this sample "profess belief—at least philosophically—in the desegregation of schools," according to Smey. However, less than half (47 percent) agreed that desegregation is *necessary* to ensure equal educational opportunities for all children. One superintendent even stated that schools could be separate and equal, contrary to the Supreme Court's ruling.

While 70 percent said they favored compulsory busing to achieve desegregation within the same district, a large majority (15) were opposed to cross-district busing. The few who favored cross-district busing were those representing communities with a large percentage of nonwhites.

The views expressed by these administrators charged with carrying out desegregation policy may surprise some readers. But they seem to substantiate Smey's conclusion that "school superintendents would be prone to endorse only those busing policies which would meet with the approval of the American public."

Teele, James E. *Evaluating School Busing: Case Study of Boston's Operation Exodus*. *Praeger Special Studies in U.S. Economic, Social and Political Issues Series*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973. 150 pages. ED 083 334.

In 1965, a group of poor black parents, with support from some sectors of the white community in Boston, started Operation Exodus, a school busing program involving several hundred black children. It was, according to Teele, "the first such undertaking initiated by blacks in any community in the United States. Indeed, it was analogous to the first shot in a war."

Teele chronicles the development of Operation Exodus, and he presents the results of the research he conducted on the effects of busing and desegregation on both the bused students and on their parents. He found improvement in academic achievement, especially in reading skills, for the bused students. The parents who initiated the program "tackled and mastered many problems that were new to them" and ended up influencing the whole black community.

Teele criticizes his own evaluative research study on the grounds that an adequate control group of nonbused white students was difficult to obtain and that the collection of data did not extend over a long enough time period. He notes that it is essential for evaluators to conduct careful research without antagonizing either their subjects or the other parties involved in what are sometimes politically explosive situations.

While he states that he is "not an all-out advocate of busing," Teele maintains that instead of "inveighing against busing, we should be trying to establish optimal educational techniques and strategies" for all children.

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